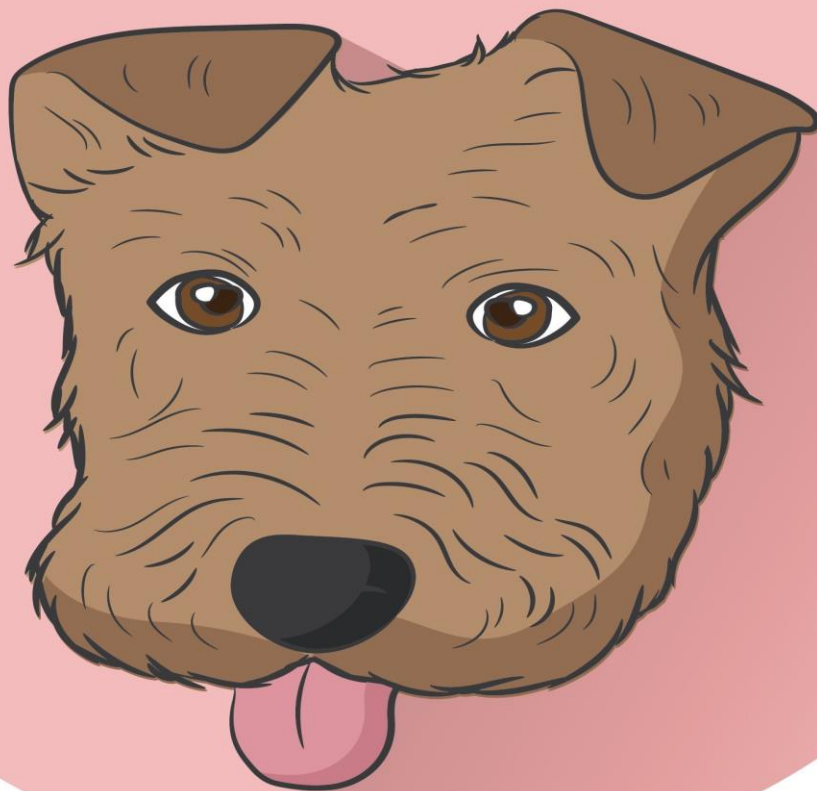


How To Choose a Dog

It's Easy If You Do It Smart



Sue Mills

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Foreword

Making the choice to add a dog, as an addition to the family unit, is not something to be taken lightly. This is a very big and important decision and should be given due consideration. Get all the info you need here.

Choosing A Dog Basics

Synopsis

The following are some points that should be considered when making this very important choice:

The Basics

If the decision involves getting a puppy as opposed to be mature animal, the individual must make sure all the supporting elements are in place before the puppy is brought into the existing family unit. Some of the things to consider would be if such an addition is needed in the first place, then there should be health considerations to be looked into such as allergies.

Other considerations may include the availability of space and adequate facilities for the puppy and if there is enough room and finances to accommodate such needs.

There are also licensing issues to consider as the authorities usually look into such violations quite strictly.

Adding a mature animal to the existing unit is also something that cannot be taken lightly, as the temperament of the existing unit and the animal have to be compatible.

Without this compatibility both sides are bound to encounter problems and the animal would most likely be the one that suffers the most.

Then there is also the need to do an adequate amount of research if the decision is made to acquire a pure bred animal. The complications here can be considerable and the cost to acquire

such an animal will be high. The upkeep of such dogs is also very costly as they often require specifically designed care and food.

Adopting a dog from an animal shelter for some is the most humane choice to make and this is of course welcomed by both the animal and the shelter.

Most organizations encourage this and there are often periodical campaigns launched to get the public to consider adopting these animals.



Utilize Your Vets Knowledge

Synopsis

Getting the advice of a vet when considering the purchase of a pet is very useful as the vet will be able to point out various issues that will affect both pet and the individual in ways often not considered. Therefore getting some guidance from someone like a vet will help to give the individual a better perspective on the overall needs, problems, sometimes inconveniences and requirements of owning a pet.

The Vet

Perhaps the most important advice that the vet is more likely to impart would be that on the cost involved in having a pet. Besides the additional food needs, there are also a host of other costs that would be required and this might burden the individual if this scenario is not anticipated and factored into the equation.

Most people are really not fully aware of all the various costs that are usually incurred when having a pet. These may include vaccines, de-worming, flea treatment, neutering, and any medical fees that may be incurred when the animal is unwell.

The vet will also be able to help the individual decide on the most suitable type of pet to acquire that would most suit the individual's lifestyle and living conditions.

This is important and often not considered by the individual interested in having a pet, especially if the intended choice is a puppy.

The individual will not be adequately informed or be prepared for the requirements needed when the said puppy eventually grows into a mature animal.

There are a lot of animals that look cute, especially when they are puppies but require a lot of upkeep as they age, and without the vet's

helpful advice the individual may not be prepared to adapt to such changes.

Most well meaning vets will also encourage the individual to get a pet from a shelter especially if the individual is not prepared to look after the delicate needs of a puppy. In most cases this would seem like a better option for the individual especially if there are no children in the equation to consider.



Think About Your Daily Routine

Synopsis

For those who are considering adding a pet to the current family unit or as a companion for a couple or a single person, thinking about how this addition is going to fit into the current daily routine scenario is very important.

A lot of people fail to take into serious consideration, how a pet will affect their lives, especially if the individual is getting the pet to pacify the needs of a child.

Children will often promise to be totally committed to looking after the pet, but this usually ends up being the adult's burden once the child's initial excitement wears off.

Then the adult will have to pick up the slack, left behind by the child and this could be something that would be both inconvenient and a nuisance.

Think About It

There are also instances where having a pet would just not be feasible or workable, as the individual may have a schedule that requires a lot of travelling.

If this is the case then alternatives would have to be arranged, where the pet can be taken care of in the same committed fashion as the owner, and this is often very hard to find or arrange. This would not only cause distress to the owner of the pet, but would also cause distress to the pet itself.

Other elements to consider would be the need to consider if the pet would be left alone a large part of the time, thus constituting to neglect and emotional trauma for the pet.

Most people should be made to understand that pets have feelings too, and these feelings should be taken in serious consideration if the pet is going to live a healthy and problem free life.

Failing to consider this would not only cost the pet its mental and physical well being, but would also be costly for the owner when the services of a vet have to be frequently sought.



Think About Your Surroundings

Synopsis

The surroundings the pet is going to be positioned into is important to the eventual mental and physical well being of the animal. Therefore some informed decisions should be made, to accommodate such needs before the animal is purchased.

The Environment

The following are some of the elements to consider about the surroundings the pet is eventually going to be exposed to:

Some pets require a lot of room to move around in and also a large outdoor space where they can run around and enjoy the freedom that animals are supposed to enjoy.

Without such allowances, such pets will eventually develop medical problems that would result in trauma for both the owner and the pet in question.

There is also the unwanted added cost that would be uncured, when there are frequent visits to the vet.

If the pet is going to be confined to an area that is noisy and very busy, this too may not be conducive for the pet. Some pets are able to cope with high levels of activity and noise while others can't, thus the need to consider the types of breeds suitable for adapting to these kinds of surroundings.

If there are frequent weather changes in the surroundings, the owner of the pet should be able to provide adequate shelter for comfort and safety of the animal.

Failing to consider this and make the necessary arrangements could create problems with the governing law of the area.

This is especially likely if the individual's implementing the law take their jobs very seriously. The owner could be slapped with fines and sometimes even have the suffering animal taken away.

Other considerations may include having fences put up as precautionary measures to keep the pet inside and away from causing possible harm to others.



Decide The Dogs Purpose

Synopsis

There are several reasons to consider having a dog, but not all the reasons may be good argumentative points to encourage the individual to actually go out and purchase one.

There should be a lot of thought and consideration given to the idea of having a dog featured in the individual's life before physically making it a reality. – 18 –

The Purpose

The following are some of the possible reasons that most dog owners consider important and the contributing factors, to eventually making the decision to own a dog:

Among the top reasons for having a dog would be for companionship. Often dogs are regarded as ideal and good companions. This is mainly because of the popular idea that a dog is always happy and willing to spend time with the owner, unlike humans, who often consider their own needs before the needs of others. A dog is almost always eager and waiting to greet the owner and this is very heart warming after a hard and long day at work.

Security is another top reason, why most people consider having a dog as a pet. This is especially popular for families and single ladies. The dog is perceived to be able to provide the extra protection needed for the unwanted and un welcomed intrusions into the lives of the owners. Most owners find that having a dog minimizes the risks of break-ins and robberies, thus giving them the sense of security needed for mental comfort.

For the elderly and those who are going through traumatic health problems, having a dog often creates the necessary diversion which helps them focus on something else rather than dwell on their own problems. Studies have shown a phenomenal amount of success when it comes to having dogs as pets for these two categories.



Research The Best Place To Get The Dog

Synopsis

Now that making the decision to actually getting a dog has been made, the next step would be to actually go about physically getting the dog. There are many places where this can be done but some proper research should be done first to ensure the best options are looked into before the final purchase is made.

Where To Go

The following are some of the places that should be considered when getting a dog:

The first consideration should be to approach the nearest animal shelter to view the dogs available and try to find one that would suit the needs of the individual. This is a good idea as it helps the individual fulfil the need to get a dog and also gives the dog a new lease on life and a new home. Most of the dogs face certain euthanization. This sad option can be avoided if the individual considers such places as a good opportunity to get a pet.

There are also animal rescue shelters that can be visited with the same idea in mind. Here a lot of the pets are already trained as they probably come from homes that for some reason could no longer keep them. This is an ideal option to choose from especially if the individual does not have the time to house train the animal.

Pet shops are also another option to look into, however this option is often opposed by animal rights groups and pet lovers, as their perceived and often proven involvement as puppy mills and breeding tactics. Another reason this particular option is not encouraged, is because of the already large availability of animals that need good homes. These should be given priority over those from pet shops, where the main idea is to make money from the sale of the animal.



Make Sure You Are Ready For A Pet

Synopsis

The following are some of the areas that should be considered to ensure the individual is more than ready and prepared for the new addition to the equation:

Make Sure

Preparing a specific area of rest for the pet is important. Doing a little research and shopping for the right items that will provide the necessary comfort for the pet, is essential in getting the pet to accept and get used to the new allotted space.

Getting some appropriate toys and other items that would keep the pet occupied and away from damaging furniture and other household items is also important. If the pet becomes bored, from lack of nothing to do, keeping them distracted is important otherwise; the pets will more likely turn to household objects to satisfy their curiosity and the need to mark out their territory.

Providing the pet with the necessary toilet facilities suitable to the breed will also be an added advantage to consider as this will be much less stressful for both the owner and the pet. The toilet area should be adequate to fulfill the needs of the pet, if this is not possible then the owner should make a serious effort to provide other means of release for the pet.

Having a daily routine that can easily accommodate the participation of the pet is also important to consider, especially if the said pet is kept confined and alone for the better part of the day. Ensuring an adequate amount of exercise is incorporated into the pet's daily routine, such as walks, playing ball and other pet friendly activities should be the norm.

The preparations before bringing a pet into the living environment, is very important. As this initial period should be as problem free as possible, so that it does not cause discomfort to the individual as well as the new pet.

So You Want To Train Your Dog

Dogs are among the most popular family pets around the globe. They have been known for their sense of loyalty, compassion and most of all their ability to be trained more than any other popular pet.

Dogs can be taught a myriad of tricks and behaviours ranging from very basic ones like sitting, begging and going outside to do their business to extremely complex tricks like acrobatics and scent recognition.

Every dog is different so training is never a guaranteed experience but just about any canine can be trained if you have the will and the desire. In this book I'm going to explore the most basic training methods that can be used on all or most dogs, usually without fail.

I'm going to emphasize positive reinforcement training as it is not only effective but much safer than alternative methods that have been used throughout the years. Due to the short nature of this book we will probably not venture into theatrical tricks or acrobatics; it's always smart to start with a good foundation and that begins with obedience training.

Obedience training is a general term which can be achieved through the many various dog training techniques. Regardless of which training technique you choose to employ, your techniques should build or strengthen a healthy and appropriate relationship between you and your dog.

Training opens up a clear line of communication between you and your dog. This includes you knowing what to expect of your dog in all circumstances, and your dog understanding and respecting what is expected of him/her. Dog Training for Obedience lays down a set of rules or boundaries which educates your dog to become a responsible member of society. Including how to relate to other dogs, animals and people, basic manners and how to behave in any situation.

Lastly it establishes the groundwork which assists in preventing the development of unacceptable problem behaviour – such as jumping up, barking, chewing, digging etc.

Key Benefits of Obedience Training

Dog training for obedience is the very best thing you can do for the relationship you enjoy with your dog. Basic obedience training makes life simple to your dog and eliminates confusion. Your dog will know his place in the world and understand right from wrong. Dogs really appreciate this black and white view of the world.

Training done right is fun and rewarding for both you and your dog. You'll have a happy, relaxed and confident dog who you can take anywhere and will be a pleasure to be around. Greater freedom can also be extended to your dog, as he'll be more trustworthy when obedience trained.

An obedience trained puppy or dog is a much safer dog. If your dog dashes out the front door you will still have voice control over him. You will be able to call on one of your obedience training commands like "come" "down" or "sit". This is very reassuring for any dog lover.

You gain trust and mutual respect with your dog. He understands what is expected of him and knows that you will always be fair and consistent with this. When your dog is trained in obedience he will be fine around friends and kids under supervision.

Training also meets some of the most important rudimentary needs your dog has like exercise, mental stimulation, spending time with you and providing activities to keep your canine friend happy. Dog training for obedience greatly reduces the risk of being locked in a dominance struggle with your dog. You'll be his strong and always fair leader, who he'll respect and look to for guidance.

Obedience training is a step by step process which you build upon over time. It creates a foundation for your dog to learn additional skills and training commands. Throughout this process your dog will be gaining confidence along the way.

It's A Lack Of Training That's Dangerous!

It's an unfortunate reality that untrained dogs are the major cause for puppies and dogs ending up in animal shelters all over the world. This is good for nobody, especially the poor dogs. Your dog can't ever be really close with you and your family. By this I mean that your dog won't be involved in family outings, instead spending much of his time alone in the yard. This can bring on numerous behavioural problems and can be a real pest for you, and even your neighbours. Your dog can be unsafe around people, other animals and on the roads.

It is a common trait for untrained dogs to challenge your leadership or authority. Obedience trained dogs will also try to test you out in this manner. But when you are proficient in obedience training you'll have the tools to deal with it. Constantly (but not effectively) your dog will be yelled at and pushed further away from you and your family.

Pre-Training Guidelines

You'll find proven training techniques for specific obedience commands by selecting from the list below. These are some general tips to keep in mind that hold true in any dog training for obedience situation:

Praise and reward your dog when he does what you ask of him, give an appropriate correction when he doesn't do what he has been taught to do. The key is to find the right balance for your dog.

Don't expect your dog to just know this stuff straight away. Repetition of the command and the action is crucial. Believe in what you are doing and stick to it.

Always be consistent (this includes everybody who lives with your dog), make it easy for your dog. Give him a simple decision to make and make it clear to him which way is acceptable and which way is unacceptable – provide instant feedback.

Never correct or punish your dog for not doing something he has not been properly taught to do – be realistic and fair.

Make your training sessions short, sharp and fun – for you and your dog. This is where many dog training schools fall down.

Take it slow, master one easy command to start with then move on and build upon it. Continue to mentally challenge and stimulate your dog throughout the training process.

You're the best person to perform these tasks with your dog. Your dog has to live with you, you are his pack and you must be the person he looks to for leadership and who he respects.

Test or proof the obedience commands in different situations, places and with added distractions.

Incorporate obedience training into your daily routine – your dog could perform a "sit" before you give him his dinner, or a "down stay" when you go get the mail.

Never try to correct your dog if you don't catch him in the act of doing wrong, timing your correction is all important.

Find out what motivates your dog, this will be an important tool in your training sessions.

Puppy Training: Leash Walking

While the previous three commands are good to start at any age, there are some things that you need to start as early as possible so your puppy can grow up with these habits. One of the first things you need to teach your young puppy is how to behave on a leash.

It is a crucial skill to master for both you and your dog's future. After training a puppy to walk on a leash they are much safer and more manageable, plus it means walking is an experience you can both look forward to and enjoy.

If you follow the steps outlined below you should have your puppy leash trained within a couple of weeks. Some puppies will get it down in a matter of days and some will take much longer but just about any dog can learn the basics so never give up. Don't just expect your puppy to know this stuff! Your goal is to clearly communicate to your dog, what is acceptable behavior on the leash, and what is not.

The Three-Step Guide:

Step 1: Collar Familiarity

This first step can begin as soon as your puppy arrives at his new home. All it involves is getting your young pup familiar with and comfortable wearing a collar. A simple light weight leather collar is ideal for this task. Place it on your puppy when you feed him or as you are playing, this provides a bit of a distraction from the collar. He'll probably roll around trying to dislodge it, or try his best to scratch it off. When he is doing this it is important that you don't take it off him. Wait till he has settled down and forgotten about it before you take it off.

Step 2: Leash Familiarity

Once your puppy is happy wearing his new collar, it is time to introduce the leash. Same thing again here, you just want to get him comfortable with the leash, and to show him the leash is not to be feared. Any light weight, thin leash is fine for this step. You can buy your puppy a fancy leather leash after he is properly leash trained if you choose. All you need to do is clip the leash onto his collar, let him check it out and drag it around the house (always under your supervision). He'll forget about it after a while.

Step 3: In-Depth Leash Training

Now that your puppy is comfortable in his collar and with the leash, it is time to pick up the other end of the leash. Make these first leash training sessions short, sharp and fun. At this early stage you will probably find that your puppy loves to follow you around everywhere – use this to your advantage. To start with just walk around the house with the leash in hand, and your puppy trotting alongside you. When he is walking along on a loose leash give him plenty of praise, petting and even some treats.

When he strains on the leash, stop immediately. Don't yank him back over to you with the leash, just call him back over to you and praise him when he comes. Never ever keep walking when your puppy is pulling on the leash, this only rewards his behaviour and reinforces the habit. Your puppy has to learn that when he pulls on the leash, he gets nowhere. If he wants to continue walking, it has to be by your side on a loose leash. The same rule applies if your puppy sits down when you are walking. Don't yank him forward towards you, just call him over and reward him when he arrives. Then set off walking again with your puppy by your side.

This method of training a puppy to walk on a leash is suited to very young puppies, it requires no pulling from you or your dog. The result is a nice loose leash hanging down between you and your dog. All it takes to achieve this is to follow the above steps, then apply some patience and persistence.

The "Sit" Command

Training your dog to sit on command is a good place for you and your dog to start your obedience training. It's a nice easy command which your puppy or dog will master very quickly. This will increase your dog's confidence and provide a foundation on which to build more advanced skills and commands.

Another benefit of training your dog to sit is that it gives you a good alternate behaviour to request of your dog. If your lovely dog likes to greet visitors to your home by jumping up all over them, or charges out the front door every time it opens, you can gain control of him by applying your "sit" command.

You can start with this obedience command as soon as you bring your new puppy home, or any time after that. Before you start training your dog to sit (or any other obedience command) ensure that your dog is confident and comfortable around you – lets you touch him, gives you his attention etc.

General Rules To Remember When Training Your Dog To Sit

Keep your training sessions short, ten minutes is plenty to begin with.

Any time is a good time to practice really, you don't have to structure all your lessons. Incorporate the training into your daily routine. Get your dog to sit before you feed him or make him sit before you throw his ball at the park. When applied in this manner obedience training will be fun in your dog's mind, and rewarding.

Make it perfectly clear to your dog what you are asking of him – what you want him to do.

Make training your dog to sit fun, don't make it feel like a chore, for you or your dog.

Training sessions should be full of consistent repetition, praise and positive reinforcement.

Don't expect your dog to immediately learn this, or any other obedience command and then never forget it. It's up to you to reinforce the meaning of your command through repetition and consistency throughout your dog's life.

Gradually phase out the food rewards you may use in the learning period of a new command. Giving a food treat or reward every now and then doesn't hurt your dog though, even if he respects your commands without one.

When training your dog to sit for the first time, make it easy for him/her to succeed. Start your training sessions in a familiar environment to your dog, free from other distractions. Master the command in this setting, then slowly make it harder for your dog. Add other variables, throw a challenge out to your dog such as taking the training session to the park or increase the duration of the sit

The Three-Step Guide:

Step 1: Puppy Connection

This first training technique is great for young puppies. When you are with your pup and you see him about to sit or in the act of sitting, say "sit" in a clear and firm tone. As soon as your dog's rear end hits the floor, give him praise and maybe a bit of a scratch behind the ear. In your dog's mind you are building an association between your verbal "sit" command and the act of him sitting.

Most puppies make this connection very quickly. Before long you will be able to say "sit" at any time, and your puppy will understand what you are asking of him. Remember to always reward and praise your pup as soon as his behind hits the floor. Your pup will love it, he'll be thinking "all I have to do is sit down and I get attention, treats and praise!"

Step 2: "Off Leash" Training

For older puppies and dogs this training technique works every time. With your dog standing right in front of you, grab a small tasty treat in your hand. Guide the treat from his nose level up over his head, the treat should be a few centimetres away from your dog at all times. Your inquisitive dog will follow the treat up with his nose and at the same time his rear end will hit the ground.

As soon as his behind hits the ground give him the treat and lavish him with praise. If your dog backs away or jumps up at the treat you are taking your hand too far back over his head, or holding it too far away from his nose. Repeat this step until your dog gets it, then you can introduce the verbal part of the command. Just before you begin to move your hand (the one with the treat in it) say "sit". Your dog will soon respond to your verbal "sit" command without you even moving your hand. Remember to practice/reinforce this command at any time throughout the day, in any situation.

Step 3: "On Leash" Training

If your dog doesn't respond to the methods outlined above, or if you prefer to use a collar and leash in your training, this technique will do the trick. Stand next to your dog, both of you facing the same way. Hold the leash straight up, directly above the collar. At the same time gently press down on your dog's back (down near his hips) and say "sit". As soon as your dog is in the sitting position, reward and praise him. Within no time you won't need to press down on your dog's back or even hold the leash up. He will understand that your "sit" command means that you require him to plant his backside on the ground. And he'll be happy to do it for you because he knows that he receives praise and attention when he does.

The “Down” Command

The down command is the next lesson to teach in your dog obedience training schedule. It should be taught as soon as you and your dog have mastered the sit command. The down command is a fundamental ingredient of your overall dog obedience training program. It provides the foundation for many other advanced commands/skills and establishes you as the leader in the relationship you share with your dog.

The reason for this is that the laying down position is a submissive and somewhat vulnerable position for your dog to be in, especially when you are standing tall over the top of your dog.

The down command is a very handy tool you will come to rely on in many situations. Popping your dog down into the lying down position is great for times when you need to go into a shop or for occasions when there are small children around. It can take a bit of practice to reach this level, but it is worth the effort.

General Rules for Learning The Down Command

When you are in the learning phase of teaching the down command, start out by making it simple for your dog, then slowly turn up the difficulty level.

Move your training sessions to a public place.

Increase the time you keep your dog in the down position.

Bounce a ball around your dog when he is in the lying position, or scatter some food around him. The idea is that your "down" command will be so strong in your dog's mind, that none of these other distractions matter. He can only get up to chase the ball or eat the treats when you release him from the down command.

What you are trying to achieve with the down command is to have your dog quickly get down into the laying position, belly touching the ground and his front legs extended out in front. In a familiar environment to your dog with no distractions, let's get started!

The Two-Step Guide

Step 1: Off-Leash Training

Grab your dog's favourite tasty treat and hold it a couple of centimetres in front of his/her nose. Move your hand straight down to the ground. Your dog should follow it down (you can praise and encourage him down). As soon as his belly hits the ground, with his legs out in front, lavish him with praise and give the treat. Repeat this action over and over in short sharp training sessions.

When your dog is "getting it" and going down right away, you can add the verbal part of the command. I use "down" other people use "lay" or "drop", just choose the one you are comfortable with and stick to it (make it a one word command only). Add your command just before you start to move the treat towards the ground. This step is all about building an association in your dog's mind between the verbal "down" command and the act of him laying down.

The idea is that eventually, after plenty of repetition and praise your dog will only require your verbal command, and not the treat in your hand to lure him down. Also, in time you will be able to start the command not only from the sitting position but from standing and in any situation you and your dog are in.

When your dog is responding well to your verbal command, introduce some other variables which make the down command a little more challenging. Try the command as you go about your daily business, around other people or dogs and increase the duration of the command.

Step 2: On-Leash Training

Put your preferred collar and leash on your dog – I just use a nice leather buckle collar when teaching the down command.

Place your dog into the sitting position and stand or kneel right next to him.

Basically you are trying to guide or coax your dog into the down position. How you do this depends on the size and co-operation level of your dog.

Always say your "down" command first, then immediately guide your dog down into the lying position. Grab hold of the leash and gently pull your dog's head down, at the same time guide him down by pressing down between his shoulder blades with the palm of your hand. You can also lift up your dog's front legs and extend them out in front of him, find the method which works best for you.

Praise and encourage your dog all the way down. Then of course as soon as he's in the down position make it clear to him that you are happy with him and that he has done a good job.

After lots of repetition your dog will respond to your verbal command only. Then try the command when your dog is in the standing position and in other settings. Make the command a little more challenging by adding some distractions and increasing the time he is required to stay in the down position.

Whichever method you choose to teach your dog the down command be consistent and keep at it. When you are happy with your dog getting into the down position you will probably want to add a release command to it. This means that when you issue your down command, your dog goes straight down and is not permitted to get up until you issue another command. You can use "away" or "off you go" for this purpose.

The “Come” Command

The “Come” or “Come Here!” command is probably the most important obedience command you will ever teach your puppy or older dog. At some point in time you will no doubt rely on it to guide your dog away from serious danger.

Apart from being essential for safety reasons, when your dog has mastered the dog training “come” command he/she can be allowed greater freedom in many situations. Like when you are down at the beach or out hiking your dog can go off exploring on him own but will always be alert and ready to respond to your come command. This gives you peace of mind and is very reassuring.

Your ultimate goal when teaching the dog training come command (sometimes called recall) is to receive an immediate response from your dog upon hearing your command, every time, regardless of what else is happening in the area at that time.

Let's not kid ourselves though, this type of response is not always easy to achieve. The dog training come command can take a lot of work, and the truth is that it is very difficult for some dogs to get 100% right. For certain breeds and dogs that love to chase or have a strong scent drive the come command actually works against their natural instincts.

Don't let this put you off though, you can succeed using the techniques outlined below. Basically you can teach the fast come command as soon as you get your new puppy (the earlier the better) or older dog, and you'll be reinforcing it every time you are with your dog throughout his/her life.

Why Doesn't Your Dog Come When Called?

These are the most common reasons why our lovely dogs seemingly ignore us and don't come when we call out to them.

Your dog does not understand what the "come" command means, he simply doesn't know what you are requesting him to do.

Your dog may have been allowed to get away with disobeying your come command in the past and was not held accountable for his actions (or lack of action!).

Your dog may believe that following the scent trail of a squirrel or continuing to romp around with other dogs at the park is more appealing than coming back to you.

Maybe your dog has responded well to your command in the past but was inadvertently punished for his good behavior. This could mean that you called him over then immediately locked him in a crate, or called him over and plonked him straight into a soapy bath (which he hates!).

General Guidelines for the "Come" Command

Never under any circumstances punish your dog when he comes back to you. Even if your dog seems to take an eternity to respond to you and you've got smoke coming out of your ears through frustration, it's important that you don't get angry with your dog. She'll associate your anger with the last action he did – which was coming to you.

Your goal is to make coming to you a more attractive option to your dog than any other alternative action.

Never let your dog off leash in public before you have your dog responding very well to your come command. Your dog has to work his way up to this privilege – see the steps involved in the dog training come command below.

Your come command should be something your dog looks forward to hearing, something he has a positive association with. You do this by making it wonderful each time he comes to you, make it worth his while. Certainly do not only use the command to call your dog over to snap the leash back on after an off leash run or call him away from fun.

Incorporate the come command training into your daily activities. Use it to call your dog over for his dinner or call him over at any time just to give him a scratch behind the ear or a tasty treat.

When you are teaching your dog the come command off leash and your dog doesn't respond, don't chase after him, first try waiting for him. If you do have to go and retrieve him don't punish him when you catch up with him, just go home or start your training session again, this time on leash.

Never call your dog in situations you know your dog won't come to you. You don't want your dog to think that sometimes it is ok if he doesn't respond to your "come" command. It has to be every time and your dog must never get away with not respecting it.

As with all obedience commands start your training sessions out easy, master one step then move on and build upon it. Challenge your dog along the way, but don't move too quickly. Your dog will gain confidence all the way along this process.

Depending on what level you and your dog are up to in your obedience training, you can apply one or all of the steps outlined below. I've found that if you apply repetition, reinforcement and patience to these training techniques, you and your dog will achieve great results.

The Comprehensive Six-Step Guide:

Step: 1. Young puppies love to follow you around and often bound up to you with great delight – use this to your advantage. At this early stage all you need to do is make it clear to your puppy that you are happy to see him each time he comes to you. Make it a very pleasant and rewarding experience every time.

Step: 2. The next step is to introduce the verbal "come" command so that your dog connects its use with the act of coming to you. Start inside with no distractions around, crouch down or kneel, then in a friendly and welcoming voice say "Macy come" (Macy's my little Shih Tzu puppy), you can even wave a tasty treat around to lure your dog over if necessary. When your puppy (or older dog) gets to you, immediately praise and reward him effort. Repeat this exercise many times throughout the day to reinforce the connection.

Step: 3. If you have someone else there to help, you can now introduce the "back and forth" game. Position yourself at one side of the room and your helper on the other side. Call your dog over "Macy come" (only once, but you can encourage him over), then reward when he arrives, next your helper calls him over and rewards him when he arrives. This game is a lot of fun for your dog and teaches your dog to respect the "come" command from a person other than you. You can extend this exercise into a game of hide and seek by going into a different room to your partner, call your dog and let him find you. Make it worth him while when he does track you down – most dogs love this game.

Step: 4. Now you are confident your dog understands and is responding quickly to your "come" command you can reinforce it in different environments and situations. Put your dog on a leash (just the one you take him on walks with) and head outside. Call your dog with the same "come" command and walk backwards, when he comes close to you give him a treat and a nice scratch behind the ear. Practice this at various stages throughout your normal walk, don't forget to always praise your dog's good work!

Step: 5. The next step you can take is similar to step 4 but this time clip a long line on instead. This is a lightweight piece of rope which you can buy at pet shops or from hardware and camping stores. To start with put the long line on in a familiar environment (like your yard) and then you can progress to public places (like the dog park) when you are ready.

The long line just trails along behind your dog (she will forget it is there after a while), he will feel that he has complete freedom, but in reality you can catch him whenever you please. Continue to call your dog over "come" and praise him when he does, then send him on his way again.

Please note that the trailing long line is not used to "reel your dog in", it's there as a precautionary measure to stop your dog bolting away from you. It's very hard for any dog to outrun you with the trailing leash clipped on, and hopefully you won't need to be chasing your dog anyway.

Step: 6. Next you can challenge your dog with a fun game. Again you should introduce this game in a safe confined area free from distractions, then progress from there. You need your helper again for this exercise. Stand about 50 feet from your helper, with your dog wandering around without a leash (you can have a tab leash on if you choose).

Then throw a ball so it lands near your helper. As soon as the ball leaves your hand say "Macy come!", by doing this you are giving your dog a choice to make. He can either come to you as requested (which you would reward him for) or set off after the ball. If he decides the ball is a better option, your helper leans down and picks it up before he arrives.

Your helper just holds onto the ball and ignores your dog. When your dog decides it's time to go back to you, just give him a bit of a pat, but don't make a fuss. It's a good idea to mix it up a bit and throw the ball without issuing your "come" command at times, just let your dog get the ball.

If at any time while working through these steps your dog doesn't seem to be "getting it" just take it back a step and work on an easier level.

The “Stay” Command

After you and your dog have mastered the sit and down commands, the logical extension on them is training your dog to stay. Really when you think about it your sit and down commands aren't much value if your dog merely gets into those positions and then bounces back up straight away. That's why I like to add the stay command, although some dog trainers believe it to be an unnecessary extra command. Their theory being that when they request that their dog sits or goes into the down position, the dog should stay in that position until they are told otherwise. For those of you choose to use the stay command – read on.

Training a dog to stay can be difficult at first. In a way it goes against what your dog is used to (following you around) and also his/her natural instincts (being close to their pack). With this in mind keep the stay command very simple to begin with and build upon your dog's successes slowly.

Once you have trained your dog to hold a reliable stay in any situation you will find it handy on many occasions. It's a great behavior to request when visitors come to your home, if you need to duck inside a shop or if you have a dog who likes to bolt out the front door.

Right let's get started – it's a good idea to first train your dog to stay when he/she is calm and not all hyped up – after a walk is a good time. Your first training session should be in a familiar environment to your dog, free from any distractions and should only last for a few minutes.

The Three-Step Guide:

Step 1: Position Training

Put your dog into the position you would like him/her to stay in (use your sit, down or stand commands) and stand directly in front of him. After about 1 or 2 seconds, if your dog is still in the position you requested, give him some praise and a treat. You are rewarding the behavior you are looking for which is a stay, even if it is only 1 seconds worth to start with. As soon as you give your praise and treat, the behaviour is over (this is your signal for your dog to release from his stay) so it is fine if your dog moves off.

Then you begin the process again from the start, this time maybe hold your praise and treat off for 3 or 4 seconds. Just take it slowly and if your dog breaks out of the stay at any time before you have given him the release command, simply say "No", don't give the treat and start the process again.

Step 2: Verbalize

The next step is to add a verbal command and hand signal to step 1. It goes like this – once again stand directly in front of your dog and place him in the position you would like him to stay in. Now as soon as he is in the desired position say "stay" and at the same time hold your hand out in front of you, with your palm facing out towards your dog's nose (like a stop sign motion).

Now after waiting a second or two praise and reward your dog for staying in this position (sit–stay or down–stay etc.). As was the case in step 1 you can now repeat this process over and over, gradually increasing the time between your "stay" command and your praise and treat. What you are doing is building an association in your dog's mind between your verbal "stay" command and the act of staying in the one spot.

Step 3: Distraction Training

You've now got the stay command sorted – in its most basic form anyway. It's now time to add some other variables and build upon it. Many trainers label this proofing stage as the three D's – Duration, Distance and Distractions. Up until now (in steps 1 and 2) you have been working in a familiar environment free from distractions and you've just been standing right in front of your dog.

Let's mix it up a little, adding one new variable at a time. Start out by issuing your "stay" command with your hand signal, now take a step backwards, pause, and then step back towards your dog. If your dog has remained in his sit–stay or down–stay, praise him and give him a tasty treat. Continue to repeat this process, gradually increasing the amount of steps you take back – always remember to return back to your dog before you reward him. Keep in mind what it is you are actually rewarding him for (the stay) and if he gets up to move away he shouldn't be receiving a reward or treat.

The next challenge you can add to the stay command is to move your training session to a different location, possibly somewhere with a few distractions such as other people or animals. Remember take it slowly and only add one new variable at a time. Another good idea is to practice your stays anytime throughout the day. For example make your dog "stay" when you go out to collect the mail or "stay" when you are preparing his dinner.

A game you can play with your dog to reinforce the "stay" command is hide and seek. This game is heaps of fun and all you do is place your dog in a down–stay then run off and hide. When you are ready, sing out your release command and your dog will set off to track you down.

Note: When training a dog to stay do not keep your dog in a sit–stay for more than 2 or 3 minutes. If you need your dog to stay for longer periods use the down–stay.

The "Heel" Command

Firstly I should say that teaching a dog to heel is a different skill than training a dog to walk on a loose leash. Training a dog to heel relies on getting and holding the attention of your dog. The heel can be called upon for short periods (like when other dogs or children are around) but is not suitable for your long daily walks.

Dog Training - The Heel

When your dog is in the heeling position it means he/she is virtually pinned to your left leg (not touching though) and must stay there until released by you. Heeling is a difficult skill for your dog to master, it must be taught slowly and built piece by piece. I find that short, sharp and intense training sessions work best with my dogs. This is because learning to heel requires heaps of concentration from your dog and lots of repetition – don't expect too much too soon. Start out simple, set your dog up to succeed and don't move too quickly.

The Comprehensive Eight-Step Guide:

Ok let's have a go at building a good solid and reliable heel. You can go through these steps off leash (if possible) or on leash. The leash is there for security only, it is not used to drag your dog around or hold him in position. The idea is to condition your dog to want to be by your side rather than to force him to be there. This is the method I use to teach my dogs to heel – as with building any obedience command, start in an environment that is familiar to your dog and free from distractions.

Step: 1. Stand with your dog closely next to your left leg, both of you facing the same way.

Step: 2. Have one of your dog's favourite treats in your left hand, hold it up near your waist, not directly in front of your dog's nose. Now say "Harry" (your dog's name) to get his attention and to gain eye contact. Immediately take two steps forward then stop. If your dog moves with you and is still in the heel position enthusiastically praise him and give the treat.

Step: 3. As soon as your dog swallows his reward from step 2 repeat the heeling process again, then do it again. Say "Harry", take two steps forward offering encouragement to your dog ("come on" or "that's a good boy"), stop, praise and treat. Only ever give the reward when your dog is still in the heel position.

Step: 4. At this point your dog will be very interested and attentive. It's important to note that you are using the treat to reward his behavior rather than to lure or bribe him

Step: 5. If at any time your dog lags behind or forges ahead of you hold off with your praise and reward. Simply say "No" and start again.

Step: 6. Continue to practice your heel training and when 2 steps forward becomes easy for your dog, increase to 4 steps, then 6 steps and so on... Keep up your encouragement, praise and tasty rewards.

Step: 7. When your dog is reliably heeling for 10 or more steps it's time to.

Step: 8. You've now got the very basic heel going well and on cue, it's time to build upon it and add some more variables. Introduce the following elements one at a time and make it as easy as possible for your dog to succeed. Mix it up – continue with your enthusiasm, encouragement, praise and treats.

Walk slowly, speed up, stop, speed up etc...

Take your training session to a new location.

Add some left and right turns and then some obstacles.

Practice your heeling around other people and animals.

Increase the duration of the heel.

Roll a ball in front of you – what does your dog do?

That's the heel training process I follow and have experienced good results with. Always remember to keep your training sessions fun and don't expect too much from your young puppies, it will take some time.

The “Go To” Commands

The Go To Your Spot command a fantastic behaviour to teach your dog.

I find the "Go To Your Bed" command to be one of the most useful and most used of all of the dog obedience commands. It is great for practical and also safety reasons – I find myself calling on this command in many situations everyday including:

When visitors arrive at my home. Instead of my dogs getting all excitable and jumping all over guests I use the "Go To Your Bed" command to redirect their behaviour.

If a dog is barking excessively you can call on this obedience command which acts as an alternate behaviour for your dog to perform.

When me and my family sit down for a meal I send my dogs to their spot to give us a bit of space.

One thing to always keep in mind when applying the Go To Your Spot command is that you don't want it to feel like a punishment to your dog. In other words don't always use it when your dog is in trouble, try to make it a positive, fun place for your dog to retreat to.

Follow the steps below to build the “Go To Your Spot” command slowly. Start out so it's easy for your dog to understand, then gradually make it harder by adding other variables (duration, distance and distractions).

The Nine-Step Guide:

Step: 1. Choose your designated spot (make sure it's a nice and comfortable place), attach a label to it ("Go To Your Bed" "Go To Your Mat" etc.) and stick with it.

Step: 2. Stand with your dog about 1–2 meters from the chosen spot. Say "Go To Your Bed" while pointing towards the spot. At the same time throw one of your dog's very favourite treats onto the bed. Your dog is sure to rush over to the bed to collect the tasty treat. As soon as he/she collects the treat be sure to praise him enthusiastically.

Step: 3. Repeat step 2 many times to reinforce the behavior. This also builds a connection in your dog's mind between you saying "Go To Your Bed" and pointing with the act of going over to him bed. At this point it's important to note that the treat is acting as a lure to entice your dog over to the bed – this will eventually change.

Step: 4. Now gradually increase the distance between where you and your dog are standing and the bed. Continue to practice "Go To Your Bed", point, throw the treat and then praise.

Step: 5. It's now time to change the job of the treat from being a lure to being a reward for the desired behaviour. It goes like this – say "Go To Your Bed" while pointing towards the bed, but this time do not throw the treat. By now your dog will most probably understand that your verbal command and pointing means that you want him to go to his spot. If he responds to your command by going to his bed you then give the treat (rewarding the behaviour) and lavish him with praise. If your dog doesn't "get it" go back a step by using the treat as a lure again.

Step: 6. Continue step 5 over and over again. You can practice at any time throughout the day, it doesn't have to be a set training time. Also mix up the place where you request your dog to "Go To Your Bed". Say it close to the bed, then further away and eventually even from a different room (don't move too fast though).

Step: 7. You can now add other elements to this command. One at a time you could add a distraction such as having another person in the room bouncing a ball or put your dog's food bowl down then request the "Go To Your Bed".

Step: 8. You may choose to add the dog obedience down command to this exercise.

Step: 9. After a while you should fade and vary your rewards. You can give the treat every second or third time your dog goes to his bed, or you could throw a ball for him to chase as the reward instead of the tasty treat.

Remember to keep it fun and build the "Go To Your Spot" command piece by piece over a period of a couple of weeks. If you are consistent and show a little patience, you and your dog are sure to achieve results.

The "Leave It" Command

The "Leave It" dog obedience training command is a very useful behavior to teach your puppy or older dog. You'll be surprised how often you find yourself calling on this command.

The "Leave It" command is great in many day to day situations. If you are out on a walk and your dog tries to eat animal droppings (coprophagia) off the grass or if you catch him in the process of clutching a cookie off the coffee table the "Leave It" command is perfect.

You can begin to teach the "Leave It" command at any time – it's just as necessary as the other basic obedience training commands such as sit, down, come, stay etc.

Follow the steps below to build your "Leave It" command. You'll end up having your dog under voice control – no need to be yanking and pulling against your dog with the leash.

The Seven-Step Guide:

First we need to build the behaviour, then we'll attach our verbal "Leave It" cue and finally we'll then generalize the behaviour.

Step: 1. In a familiar environment to your dog, free from any distractions (other people or animals) sit down in front of your willing dog.

Step: 2. In one hand place an ordinary "Leave It" treat (some kibble or other plain dry treat) in the other hand place your dog's very favorite "jackpot!" treat (liver, hotdog, cheese etc.).

Step: 3. With the ordinary "Leave It" treat resting on your open palm, extend your hand out towards your dog. Don't say anything. When your dog reaches forward to gulp down the treat, quickly close your hand – don't let him get it. If he withdraws his interest, immediately say "Yes!" and give the jackpot treat from your other hand. Alternatively, if he is really persistent and determined to get at the kibble treat in your closed fist, just hold it out of his reach and ignore him.

Step: 4. About 10 seconds after trying Step 3, do it again. This time if he doesn't dive straight in after the "Leave It" treat, enthusiastically say "Yes!", give the jackpot treat from your other hand and give him a loving scratch behind the ear. If he goes for the ordinary "Leave It" treat straight away, close your fingers over it again. He will probably look up at you in a quizzical, puzzled manner – which is good. As soon as his attention is off the treat say "Yes!" give the jackpot treat from your other hand and praise his good work.

Step: 5. Continue Steps 3 & 4 many times (repetition and consistency are two of the vital keys to successful dog training!). Pretty soon your dog will catch on that if he doesn't go for the boring old "Leave It" treat he will be rewarded with a monster "jackpot" treat from the other hand.

Step: 6. Now your dog understands the basic behaviour it's time to attach your verbal "Leave It" cue. This is so we can request the behaviour whenever the need arises. Continue practising exactly as you have been except you now say "Leave It" just as you begin to extend your hand (the one with the ordinary treat) towards the dog. This step builds an association in your dog's mind between you saying "Leave It" and the act of him leaving an object alone.

Step: 7. Now you've got the behaviour and you've got it on cue it's time to add some other variables. This step generalizes and proofs the "leave it" command so we can rely on it in any circumstance. One at a time introduce the new elements listed below – don't move too quickly for your dog, take it slowly.

While practising the Leave It command hold your hand in different positions – close to the ground, up at your dog's eye level etc...

Hold off with saying "Yes" and giving the jackpot treat until your dog actually looks you in the eye.

Put the ordinary treat straight down onto the ground in front of your dog and say "Leave It" – if your dog goes for the treat quickly cover it with your foot.

Take your training sessions into other rooms and eventually outside.

Say "Leave It" when you are at varying distances from your dog.

Practice in the presence of distractions such as other people and dogs.

Practice when you are out on your daily walk – with your dog on leash drop some treats on the ground and then walk past them.

The Leave It command is very useful and not all that difficult for your dog to learn, it won't take long to teach. The important thing to keep in mind is that you need to make leaving the object alone a more attractive alternative to your dog than going for it.

The “Stand” Command

The stand command is a very handy behaviour for you and your dog to have in your repertoire. The stand command is a behaviour you will call on in many different situations. It's great when you visit your Veterinarian or dog groomer. You'll also call on the stand command when bathing your dog and clipping his/her nails. It's also the best position for your dog to be in if you require him to stay for long periods.

As we do when teaching any new command/behaviour we always start out in a familiar place which is free from any distractions. Make it as easy as possible for your dog when learning the stand command – then we can throw in some other variables.

The Six-Step Guide

The first step is to reward as many instances of the "stand" behaviour as possible – through shaping it or simply letting it occur naturally.

To begin with you should teach the stand command when your dog is in a sitting position and then from the laying down position.

Step: 1. Grab a few tasty treats in your hand – this will be used to lure your dog into the stand position. Your dog's nose will target the treat in your hand. With your dog sitting hold the treat a few inches in front of his/her nose. Then slowly draw it away horizontally (parallel to the ground). There is no need to say anything to your dog at this stage. If your dog responds to this lure by getting up into the stand position you should immediately reward him with a treat and some enthusiastic praise. NOTE: If your dog does not follow your food lure you can give him some verbal encouragement, or give him a bit of a prod with your finger to get him moving.

Step: 2. Continue to repeat and practice this food targeting exercise – always reward a desired response.

Step: 3. This next step is to get the stand behaviour without using food as a lure – you will be using the food only as a reward from now on. You achieve this by continuing exactly as you have been, but this time without any food in your hand. Ok so now the process is that you put your empty hand in front of your dog's nose and slowly move it away horizontally. 9 out of 10 dogs will continue to follow your hand – even without the treat. If your dog continues to follow, you should reward immediately with a treat from your other hand and also praise just as you have already been doing.

If your dog does not follow your empty hand you can go back to giving some verbal encouragement or a bit of a prod with your finger. Once your dog is consistently following your empty hand you can cut back on the food reward. Put your dog on a variable food reward schedule – reward every second successful stand, then every third and so on. Mix it up to keep your dog guessing.

Step: 4. Once your dog is solid with the process in step 3 you can add your verbal command to the stand exercise. Basically we can now get the behaviour we desire (the stand), now it's time to add the verbal cue which will trigger the behaviour. What you do is say "stand" then continue with the same process as in step 3. The process goes like this – say "stand", use your hand signal, then praise and reward as soon as your dog gets into the stand position. Repeat this process many times – anytime throughout the day is a good time to practice. This step builds up the association in your dog's mind between you saying "stand" and the act of him standing.

Step: 5. It's now time to drop your hand signal and any other prompting and rely on your verbal cue only. Say "stand" and wait for your dog to move. It is highly likely that your dog will continue to stand just as he has been in the previous steps. He will already have made the connection between your verbal "stand" command and the act of him standing. If your dog does not move when you say "stand" your dog is not ready for this step – go back and practice step 4 some more.

Step: 6. When you have the basic stand command rock solid on verbal command it's time to add some other variables. This step is all about generalizing, strengthening and proofing the stand command. What this means is that you build on the basic command to make it effective for longer periods, in a wide range of locations and in the presence of other distractions.

Everyone's Favourite: "Fetch"

The fetch command, also known as retrieve, is one of the most popular commands that people want to be able to teach their dogs. A quick game of fetch is a fantastic outlet for a dog's natural prey drive and knocks the edge off even the most energetic of dogs. Plus it's one of the few interactive games you and your dog can play together – it's a brilliant way to strengthen the human-dog bond.

Most dogs love to chase a ball and return it to you, but many dogs need a little guidance to get the behavior up to a satisfactory level. You'll find your dog to be a natural or reluctant retriever at first, but after a while most dogs love playing a game of fetch. Why wouldn't they? It's great fun!

Teaching a rock solid and reliable retrieve takes a few separate steps to get just right. The following steps will teach your dog to be interested in an object, charge after it when it is thrown, pick it up, return it straight back to you and drop it at your feet. All without any skylarking, sniffing, hesitation or detours!

The Five-Step Guide

Step 1:

Let's start out by playing a simple and fun game. In a small room free from any distractions, sit down on the floor with your dog. Have a small squeaky toy in your hand and some tasty treats in your other hand. Ideally the toy will be one that your puppy has shown interest in. Now toss the toy a small distance (still within your reach) from yourself and let your puppy pounce on it – you can encourage your puppy if need be. When your puppy grabs the toy you should reach out and take it from his/her mouth while saying "good puppy". As soon as you have hold of the toy you need to replace it by feeding a treat to your dog.

If your puppy won't let go of the toy, simply use the treat as a bribe. Hold the treat just in front of his nose and wait for him to drop the toy – praise your dog and give him the treat as soon as the toy drops from his mouth. Practice this simple game in 5 minute blocks at least a couple of times a day. This is the crucial first step towards developing a solid and reliable fetch or retrieve in your dog.

Step 2.

Now we will continue the game we played in Step 1 but this time we will add a release word or cue to the exercise. As you are taking the toy from your puppy's mouth (or when he drops it in your lap) say "thank you" or "thanks" and immediately give the treat and praise – just as you did in Step 1. Repeat this process many times, you are building an association in your dog's mind between your "thanks" cue and the act of him giving the toy to you. After plenty of practice and continual reinforcement (the treats) you will not have to grab the toy from your dog's mouth, he will give it to you upon hearing your cue word. Now we have got the basic fetch behavior we are trying to shape – we just need to build on it a little more.

Step 3.

Now we can slowly (very slowly) increase the distance of the retrieve. Start out by throwing the toy a couple of meters from you – hopefully your dog will continue to pounce on the toy and bring it back to you for his treat. Continue just as you have been, say your release cue "thanks" and give the treat for every successful retrieve. Important: If at any time your dog does not bring the toy back to you do not chase him or make a fuss. Simply sit and wait patiently until he brings it back to you – then treat as normal. Your aim is to make it clear to your dog that in order for the fun and games to continue he must bring the toy back to you. If your dog doesn't bring the toy back to you, finish up and try again later on – next time go back to the shorter and easier retrieve game as in Step 1.

Step 4.

Continue practising this game of fetch over and over. Repetition and positive reinforcement are the keys to building and strengthening a solid retrieve. You can now mix up the distance you throw the toy and take your training sessions into different rooms within the house. When you introduce a new object such as a ball (which is what you will use for a game of fetch at the dog park) to the game you need to start out again at a short distance and increase the distance slowly. Remember to only ever treat and praise your puppy when the retrieve object gets delivered directly to you.

Step 5.

That's pretty much the retrieve behaviour built in 4 steps. If you like you can now add a cue at the start of the exercise. Simply say "fetch" or "get it" just before you throw the ball. After a while when you say your "fetch" cue your dog will look straight up at you in anticipation of a chase.

You can also gradually fade the treats now. The game itself will be reward enough for your dog. Instead of a tasty treat being your dog's motivation, the next throw of the ball will be enough of an incentive for him to bring the ball straight back to you.

The retrieve is a great exercise to teach most dogs and it will only take you a couple of days to work through the 5 steps outlined above. Pretty soon you will have an eager dog who drops the ball at your feet at any opportunity!

You're Ready To Move On To Greater Things!

If you've followed this book closely you should be ready to start teaching your dog complex tricks and behaviours in a matter of weeks! Always remember to be patient and always use positive reinforcement to teach your dog. Dogs who are abused or scared into obedience often don't have an actual understanding of the behaviours they learn and develop other behavioural problems that could make them a threat to you or your family. With a little patience and a lot of love you and your furry friend will be enjoying each other's company without worrying about behavioural issues in no time!

**THANK
YOU**

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